



CADILLAC DREAMS

When visiting Tod in Malta,
he had a surprise for me.

Langston Harris

Cadillac Dreams

Check out my new car, he said. Wow! A Caddy, I replied. Imagine owning a used 2005 Cadillac here. He proudly exclaimed that it only had 15,000 miles on it and that it was a bargain. Surprisingly, he offered to let me drive. I was impressed with the condition of the old beauty.

So, off we went toward Marsaskala to search for computer accessories. Everything seemed to be going well. I was especially happy that the old Caddy's air conditioning worked well and the ride was very comfortable. But then, as we approached Mdina, the driver-side rear tire sounded like it had exploded and the car lurched a bit. I hurriedly guided the Caddy to the side of the road next to a curb, which turned out to be a big mistake (keep in mind that we were driving on the left side of the road).

We dragged ourselves out of the car into the rapidly rising heat outside to assess the damage. The tire was completely shredded but I was told there was a spare in the trunk. When it was opened, there was junk everywhere, from rolls of paper towels to oil cans. As the heat began to intensify, we began emptying some of the trash in order to get to the spare. After an arduous struggle (with much bending and lifting), the ornery spare tire relented and we got it out of the trunk. We began trying to raise the car with the jack that we found with the spare. The task was compromised by the curb because it was so close to the wheel, requiring sitting on the curb and trying to stuff the jack under the lowered two-ton car. But, after a long struggle, we were able to raise the car enough to allow us to remove the wheel with the shredded tire. But then we needed to remove the lugnuts holding the wheel onto the car, which probably had not been taken off for a long time. We took turns wrestling with them and, finally, removed the wheel and prepared to replace it with the spare. Hot, tired and sweating heavily, we reloaded the trunk and restarted our journey.

Then, after about a quarter mile, the spare, that we had just put onto the car, went completely flat. Although driving with the flat tire could damage the wheel, we continued on until we found a parking lot. We parked there and Tod called his mechanic to come and retrieve the Caddy. So, we waited

in the heat until the mechanic came to tow the car back to his shop. Fortunately, he was able to give us a ride back to Tod's apartment, where he had his old, faithful Honda. We climbed in (I wasn't asked to drive again) and continue on our journey to Marsaskala.

I suppose there is no moral to this story, but it reminded me that, even driving a Cadillac can have a downside. That car eventually ended up being given away to someone who may never be able to drive it again. Tod told me recently that the Caddy had been wrecked, needed lots of work and can't be registered. At least it's just a dream now.